



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

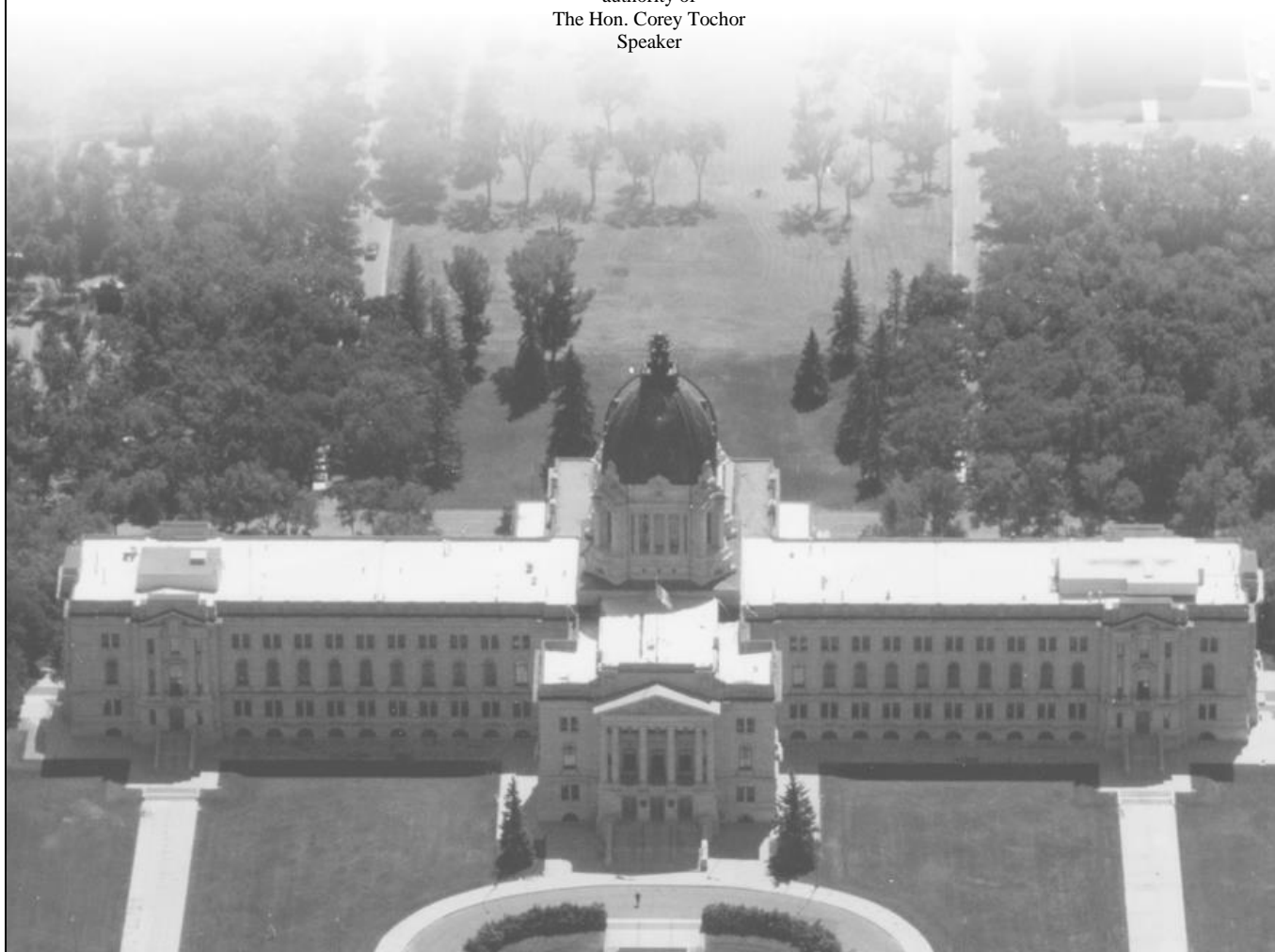
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Corey Tochor  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**1st Session — 28th Legislature**

**Speaker** — Hon. Corey Tochor

**Premier** — Hon. Brad Wall

**Leader of the Opposition** — Trent Wotherspoon

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**Beck**, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

**Belanger**, Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)

**Bonk**, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

**Boyd**, Bill — Kindersley (SP)

**Bradshaw**, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

**Brkich**, Greg — Arm River (SP)

**Buckingham**, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

**Campeau**, Jennifer — Saskatoon Fairview (SP)

**Carr**, Lori — Estevan (SP)

**Chartier**, Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)

**Cheveldayoff**, Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

**Cox**, Herb — The Battlefords (SP)

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**Dennis**, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

**Docherty**, Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)

**Doherty**, Hon. Kevin — Regina Northeast (SP)

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**Fiaz**, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

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**Hargrave**, Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

**Harpauer**, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)

**Harrison**, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

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**Kaeding**, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

**Kirsch**, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

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**Lawrence**, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

**Makowsky**, Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

**Marit**, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

**McCall**, Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

**McMorris**, Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

**Meili**, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

**Merriman**, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

**Michelson**, Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)

**Moe**, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

**Morgan**, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

**Nerlien**, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

**Olauson**, Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)

**Ottenbreit**, Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)

**Phillips**, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

**Rancourt**, Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)

**Reiter**, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)

**Ross**, Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

**Sarauer**, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

**Sproule**, Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

**Steele**, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

**Steinley**, Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)

**Stewart**, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)

**Tell**, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)

**Tochor**, Hon. Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)

**Vermette**, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

**Wall**, Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)

**Weekes**, Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

**Wilson**, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

**Wotherspoon**, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

**Wyant**, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

**Young**, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 50; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 11

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

**Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel** — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would make a request for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery today is an individual who started a business in his basement in 2001. Today that business is approaching \$2 billion in sales, about 2,000 employees worldwide, 41 manufacturing facilities on five continents.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to introduce to you and through you to members of the House, Murad Al-Katib. He is the founder, president, and chief executive officer of AGT Food and Ingredients of Regina. That's one of the fastest growing agri-food companies on the planet, Mr. Speaker, headquartered right here in Saskatchewan.

The last few months have been pretty eventful for Murad and for his entire team in terms of international and national recognition. About a year ago, the United Nations Association in Canada presented Murad with their Global Citizens Award in recognition of AGT's support of the World Food Programme and the international Red Cross. Mr. Speaker, his commitment to Red Cross continues. He's currently the Co-Chair for the Red Gala along with another outstanding Saskatchewan individual whose name is Tami Wall, Mr. Speaker.

In November Murad was named the 2016 Ernst & Young Canadian Entrepreneur of the Year. Mr. Speaker, he is the very first Saskatchewan business person, the first Saskatchewan citizen ever to receive this prestigious national award.

Mr. Speaker, Murad and his company have played a pivotal role in the growth of our pulse industry here in the province of Saskatchewan. He has helped put this province on the map when it comes to the pulse crop industry. Saskatchewan is the undisputed world leader in pulse crop exports, Mr. Speaker, in no small part due to the efforts of Murad and his team. He is a major buyer and exporter of Saskatchewan lentils, peas, beans, chickpeas shipped to 120 countries around the world.

For all of this, Murad deserves any recognition, frankly, that might come his way, although he is first to defer and first to be modest about it. But, Mr. Speaker, there's more. As we were arranging this particular visit to acknowledge and thank him for all that he has done in this province, late last month he was

named one of four recipients of the 2017 Oslo Business for Peace Award. Mr. Speaker, Murad is the first Canadian to ever receive this honour. Murad was recognized for "... his entrepreneurship in leading the way in sustainable agriculture and contributing to feeding millions of refugee families in the Syrian crisis."

Mr. Speaker, on the Ernst & Young website, they note that entrepreneurs dare. There's a quote on their website that says, "They dare to dream, to imagine the unimaginable. They take enormous risks in the belief that they can bring their dreams to life, and those who succeed change the world."

This is the very definition of our friend, of my friend Murad Al-Katib. At the dawn of the millennium, he had a vision and he had a dream. And he worked at it and he persevered and he built a team, Mr. Speaker, to the great benefit not just of that team and the company and the customers of AGT, but to the great benefit of the province of Saskatchewan. And for this we should have and share a profound sense of gratitude for him that he would act on that vision, that he would step out and improve the quality of life literally of thousands of Saskatchewan employees that he has employed over the years and farmers across this province, Mr. Speaker.

On behalf of a grateful province and a grateful government, we want to congratulate him on all of this recognition and state for the record unequivocally that it is all very, very well deserved. We're very proud to claim him as a neighbour and a friend and a fellow citizen and a business leader. And, Mr. Speaker, I would just ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in thanking him and welcoming Murad to his Legislative Assembly today.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the Premier in recognizing Murad Al-Katib here in his Legislative Assembly and certainly quite rightly recognized for the enormous contributions that he's made to our province and on the community front as well within our province. And I'll get to a few of his other contributions, but this is somebody who takes care of the small stuff within our community as well. And I know him and his family and his wife are highly involved in Regina Minor Football as well, and I believe his wife is often described as the lifeblood of a team and of young people within our community.

Murad Al-Katib's story is one of dedication, one of certainly brilliance by way of planning, and one of delivering through hard work. He made his way back to Saskatchewan in fact a number of years ago when he had offered to then Premier Romanow to be a part of helping build the exports of this province. A good move by then Premier Romanow was to take him up on that offer and to have Murad come back to Saskatchewan and to do some very important work with the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership, as well as growing exports that are important to so many within this province and certainly our country.

Murad then took on an initiative that he had been planning and stepped out and started with modest beginnings in his own

basement, as has been described, and has built a global success, a Saskatchewan champion that's valued by Saskatchewan people and so important to producers of this province, really growing the entire pulse industry here in this province, providing employment by way of the hundreds — at least within Saskatchewan, maybe more — but thousands across the globe. And somebody that has always understood that you give back to your community, and to your world.

And the recognition that Murad Al-Katib has received is well deserved, and that includes the humanitarian work that's been noted with Syrian refugees, responding to the Syrian crisis, and the recognition that he has received through the United Nations, the award through Ernst & Young. We're all proud. We're all proud of that recognition that's so well deserved, and then the most recent recognition through the Oslo business recognition, I hope I'm titling it proper, but for those very important efforts from a humanitarian perspective.

So on behalf of a grateful opposition, on behalf of a grateful province, it's my pleasure to welcome Murad Al-Katib to his Assembly and to thank him for his many contributions to Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — With leave for an extended introduction, please.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Secretary.

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you. It's my pleasure to introduce some very special guests to the Legislative Assembly today, and accompanying them are Melinda Carter and Amy Standish, the senior international officers. Please welcome, for his first official visit to our province, Mr. Gert Heijkoop, consul general of the Netherlands in Vancouver. The consul general is joined by his colleague from the consul general in Vancouver, Ms. Barry Nieuwenhuijs, and the honorary consul of the Netherlands in Saskatchewan, Mr. Peter Vanriel.

The consul general has a very busy schedule during his two full days in Regina, meeting with a number of us in government, as well with representatives of the University of Saskatchewan, SaskPower, CCS Knowledge Centre, the Global Transportation Hub, and STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership].

During his visit, we are exploring areas of mutual economic interest and potential future collaboration between our two jurisdictions. Our exports to the Netherlands last year were primarily agricultural products. Saskatchewan in turn imported equipment and general chemical products from the Netherlands.

We both have very strong agricultural industries. Indeed, the Netherlands is the second-largest exporter of agriculture products in the world, and I'm advised that the Netherlands is made up of 55 per cent agriculture land. And as members of this Assembly are aware, Saskatchewan has roughly 44 per cent of Canada's arable farm land. So there may be opportunities to

learn from each other, Mr. Speaker.

There's two more little Saskatchewan-Dutch nuggets for you. The University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan have eight academic agreements from the Dutch institutions. As well, Dutch investment is helping build our province's economy through the presence of agriculture-related companies like Louis Dreyfus, Glencore, and Hendrix Genetics.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wish the consul general and his party fruitful meetings and discussions as we work together to expand the Saskatchewan-Dutch relationship. And through you, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly join me in welcoming these people to the Saskatchewan legislature. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to join with the Provincial Secretary and welcome this, an important delegation from the Netherlands to Saskatchewan. To Mr. Gert Heijkoop, consul general of the Netherlands in Vancouver; Ms. Barry Nieuwenhuijs, consul of the Netherlands in Vancouver; and to Mr. Peter Vanriel, honorary consul of the Netherlands in Saskatchewan, welcome to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. It's a pleasure to have you here today.

As the Provincial Secretary noted, the relationship between the Netherlands and Saskatchewan is a strong one and a lasting relationship. Our ties that bind run deep, a relationship that goes back all the way through the Second World War; in fact 83 members of my grandfather's own regiment with the Royal Regina Rifles were buried in the Netherlands. And I know how proud Saskatchewan people are of that service and sacrifice, and I know how thankful the Dutch people are as well.

And it's a relationship that continues to grow to this day, with strong ties in agriculture and in research and technology. And the very work that you're doing here today, growing that relationship, is a valued one and an important one.

So on behalf of the official opposition, a grateful opposition, thank you for the relationship, thank you for your presence here today and within the province. And we wish you a very constructive exchange in the days that follow. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, it's my privilege to introduce a fine young man in your gallery, Mr. Speaker: Mr. Kevin Stockman from Beechy, Saskatchewan. Kevin, give us a wave if you would. Kevin just finished his first year in business at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. As I said, he's from Beechy. His parents are Dean and Maureen Stockman. Dean's a very good friend of mine.

I had the opportunity to spend some time around the building with Kevin today. I certainly hope he enjoyed it. If I could leave him any message to come from today, Mr. Speaker, it would be to please pay no attention to anything the Agriculture minister told you at lunchtime.

Mr. Speaker, he's very interested in politics. I hope, as I said, he's been enjoying his day. It's been just a pleasure to have him in the Assembly, and I would ask all members to please join me in welcoming him to his Legislative Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. The people who have signed this petition are opposed to the Sask Party's plan to scrap and sell off the Saskatchewan Transportation Company. They would like us all to know that STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] provides a vital service to many seniors, workers, and families throughout the province; and that by scrapping STC out of the blue and without asking permission of the owners, the Saskatchewan people, the Sask Party is sending a clear sign about how little they care about protecting our Crowns like SaskTel; and that STC helps to drive the economy with parcel services that serves the farms and other businesses.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately stop the plan to scrap and the sell-off of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and to resume transportation services to the people of Saskatchewan.

It is supported and signed by many out of this province. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

**Mr. Dennis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition for the citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Canora, Crystal Lake, Pelly, Regina, and Hyas. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased again today to present a petition opposing the Sask Party's cuts to spiritual care. The petitioners believe that this government doesn't have a good sense of what professional spiritual care workers actually do, nor does this government understand the impacts that they have. The petitioners point out that with this last budget the Sask Party has eliminated funding for spiritual care services, which provided spiritual care within our health

facilities across the province; that Saskatchewan will be the only province within Canada to not fund this support for patients, residents, and their families seeking wellness.

The petitioners point out that the Sask Party hid their plan to scrap funding for spiritual care within health region facilities during the election that took place just a year ago, Mr. Speaker. And they point out, the petitioners point out that spiritual care responds to the spiritual and emotional needs of patients and residents and provides a compassionate, listening presence in times of crisis. It points out that spiritual care supports families, patients, and residents, and staff actually, Mr. Speaker, in making difficult decisions, and that spiritual care can provide support for all families, patients, and residents regardless of faith or belief, in obtaining comfort and support. The prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan immediately reinstate the funding for pastoral care services in this province's health region facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens from Landis and Saskatoon. I so submit.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again under the direction and the request for support on anyone in the Assembly to help the member from Prince Albert Northcote fight for Prince Albert for a second bridge, I stand in my place today to offer a petition in that fight. And the petition is all about the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert, that it never has been clearer than it is today. Prince Albert, communities north of Prince Albert, and the businesses that bring people and products through Prince Albert require a solution. The prayer reads as follows:

Ask that the Sask Party government stop stalling, hiding behind rhetoric, and refusing to listen to the people calling for action; and to begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are all from throughout Saskatchewan. And I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm rising again today to present a petition opposed to Bill 40 and a potential 49 per cent Crown corporation sell-off. The people who have signed this petition would like to bring to our attention the following: the Sask Party's Bill 40 creates a brand new definition for privatization never seen anywhere else that allows the government to wind down, dissolve, or sell up to 49 per cent of the shares of a Crown corporation without holding a referendum, which is in the Crown corporations protection Act.

In '15-16 alone, Saskatchewan Crown corporations returned almost \$300 million in dividends to pay for schools, roads, and hospitals. And we know those dividends should go to the people

of Saskatchewan, not private investors. Our Crown corporations employ thousands of Saskatchewan people across the province. And we know that under section 149 of the *Income Tax Act* of Canada, Crown corporations are exempt from corporate income tax, provided not less than 90 per cent of their shares are held by a government or province. The Sask Party's proposal would allow up to 49 per cent of a Crown to be sold without being considered privatized. So, Mr. Speaker, this short-sighted legislation risks sending millions of Crown dividends to Ottawa rather than to the people of Saskatchewan.

So I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately stop the passage of Bill 40, *The Interpretation Amendment Act*, and start protecting jobs and our Crown corporations instead of selling them off to pay for Sask Party mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, today's petitions are signed by citizens of Prairie River, Prince Albert, and St. Louis. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition concerning pay equity here in Saskatchewan. And the undersigned residents of the province wish to bring to our attention the following: that the citizens of this province believe in an economy powered by transparency, accountability, security, and equity; and that all women should be paid equitably; and that women are powerful drivers of economic growth, and their economic empowerment benefits us all.

And we know that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that in Saskatoon in 2016 women earned on average 63 cents for every dollar that a man makes, and in Regina women earned on average 73 cents for every dollar a man makes. According to the most recent StatsCan data, the national gender wage gap for full-time workers is 72 cents for every dollar a man makes. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan eliminate the wage gap between women and men across all sectors where the Government of Saskatchewan has jurisdiction, provide a framework under which this can be done within this term of the Assembly, and that Saskatchewan government call upon workplaces within Saskatchewan within the private sector to eliminate the wage gap between women and men.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to present a petition to increase the funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Due to a loss of funding, Prince Albert mobile crisis unit has had to close its door during

daytime hours, resulting in a loss of resource to people in distress. And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the individuals that have been falling through the cracks are individuals that have mental health issues in our community. And when they've having these mental health issues, if they phone the mobile crisis number, it's not available during the daytime hours during the week.

And so then they resort to phoning the police. And the police have been doing a good job at trying to address the issue, but it's not the area that they're experienced in and they're not trained to provide that level of service, and it takes up many, many hours of resources from the police department when it could be easily replaced with individuals who are trained in this crisis intervention and who are able to provide the services needed for these clients and tell them where they could get potential long-term services.

So, Mr. Speaker, we really need this funding restored to the Prince Albert mobile crisis, and it would just require all the ministers to get together and possibly provide a little bit of funding from each ministry to open the doors at mobile crisis. So I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to increase funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis unit so they may once again offer 24-hour emergency crisis service.

Mr. Speaker, individuals right across the province have realized that this is an issue that needs to be addressed, and these particular petitions that I have here today are signed by individuals from Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Weyburn, and Regina. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition regarding child care centres in the province. Those who've signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: across Saskatchewan, licensed non-profit child care centres are taxed inconsistently, and many of our licensed non-profit child care centres pay commercial taxes. This is not done in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], or New Brunswick.

Child care is essential to the economy, yet most centres struggle to balance their budget. And this issue threatens both the number of spaces as well as the quality of care. Quality child care has an enormous impact on a child's future outcomes and yields high rates of economic return. Quality child care centres are institutions of early learning and childhood development, and it's appropriate that they have the same tax treatment as schools. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan recognize that licensed non-profit child care centres provide programs that are foundational to a healthy society by including them in *The Education Act* and exempt all licensed non-profit child care centres in Saskatchewan from property tax through changes to the appropriate

legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the petitions that I have signed today are signed by people who reside in Zehner, Craven, Regina, Pense, Fort Qu'Appelle, and Regina Beach. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for a reverse to the cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program. Mr. Speaker, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the Government of Saskatchewan cut the budget for the Aboriginal court worker program in the 2016-17 provincial budget. They point out that the Aboriginal court workers have played an important role in helping Aboriginal people in criminal and child apprehension cases. They point out that Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately represented in Saskatchewan's correctional centres. And they point out that Aboriginal court workers successfully help to make our communities safer through reduced recidivism rates.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners are well aware that this government pointed to this program as part of the response on the part of Saskatchewan to the calls to action for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, while at the same time cutting this very program, Mr. Speaker.

In the prayer that reads as follows, the petitioners respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan reverse its short-sighted and counterproductive cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by good citizens in the city of Regina. I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to reverse cuts to Saskatchewan libraries. The Sask Party has cut funding for regional libraries in half or by 3.5 million, and eliminated funding for libraries in Regina and Saskatoon. This drastic funding cut will have a devastating impact on libraries, especially regional libraries, and the many people who depend on them. And I think we've already seen an example, several examples of that over the last week or so.

Libraries are a vital part of the communities across Saskatchewan, and the services they provide enrich the lives of many. The drastic cuts imposed on libraries will lead to branch closures, program cuts, and reduction in hours, which will hurt the many people who use library services and the hardworking and dedicated public servants who work in libraries.

Mr. Speaker, libraries are about more than just burrowing books. Meeting rooms are used by community groups; library staff host education programs and clubs, and the publicly accessible computer terminals are essential to many. There are services for seniors, children, employment support, language and reading groups, citizenship test preparation, and help for newcomers to build their resumé's. These cuts will have a disproportionate impact on rural communities where libraries

are a vital community space. Potential closures or reductions in services will severely impact our communities.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan renew its commitment to the invaluable programming, education opportunities, and public spaces our libraries provide across this province and restore the \$4.8 million in funding for public libraries that was cut in the 2017-2018 budget.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition today come from Saskatoon. I do so submit.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to present a petition calling on the government to restore funding to post-secondary education institutions. Post-secondary education is extremely important for the future of this province and yet the Sask Party is making students and their families pay for their financial mismanagement.

Saskatchewan students already pay among the highest tuition rates in the country, and this budget has cut \$36.8 million from post-secondary education and 6.4 million from technical institutions. Funding for the Saskatchewan Student Aid Fund and scholarships have been cut by 8.2 million, and a 2016 election promise has been broken by cancelling the first home plan. I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore funding to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and stop the damaging cuts to our students.

I do so present.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Melfort.

[14:00]

## World Parkinson's Day

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today, April 11th, is World Parkinson's Day, a day to increase awareness of this disease as well as the good work by world organizations dedicated to eradicating this disease. 2017 commemorates the 200th anniversary of the publishing of the first essay on Parkinson's. Parkinson's is a progressive brain disease for which there is no cure. Over 100,000 Canadians and over 6 million people worldwide suffer from Parkinson's.

Mr. Speaker, we all know someone affected by Parkinson's. Rod Gantefoer, previous Finance minister and MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Melfort, was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2010. Mr. Speaker, Rod has always had a positive outlook on his diagnosis which I greatly admire. He always says, and I quote, "It's better to wear out than rust out"

and he keeps busy. If only a positive attitude and determination were enough to overcome such a disease. Advocates are hoping to mobilize 50 countries around the world for this project, bringing us closer and closer to finding a cure for those suffering from the disease, including Rod.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members join me in acknowledging World Parkinson's Day.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

### National Wildlife Week

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, across Canada each year, the week of April 10th is celebrated as National Wildlife Week. The week was chosen as a memorial to the famous Canadian conservationist, Jack Miner, who is credited with saving the Canada goose from extinction and pioneering widespread avian tagging operations for tracking the migratory paths of birds.

Mr. Speaker, National Wildlife Week encourages Canadian people to take interest in wildlife conservation through ecology-related education, sporting, and tourism events. This year's National Wildlife Week theme is Conserve the Wonder. The theme is inextricably connected with Canada's 150th anniversary and the celebration of Canada's national parks. It encourages people to reacquaint with the wonder they felt the first time they were awed by nature and to help conserve our ecosystems for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan we have many diverse and beautiful ecosystems, and our wetlands are just one example. Wetlands are not only home to much of Saskatchewan's wildlife, they help protect us from flooding and drought. The disappearance of wetlands through unlicensed drainage has resulted in dramatic changes to watersheds throughout our province. More must be done, and our government needs to be more vigilant in its role as regulator to protect our watersheds.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing National Wildlife Week and to work towards the conservation of ecosystems like our wetlands so that future generations can appreciate the natural beauty Saskatchewan has to offer. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

### Regina Team Wins Western Hockey Championship

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the weekend, the Extreme Hockey Regina Capitals became champions of the Western Canadian Junior B league after a best-of-seven final against the Saskatoon AGI Insurance Quakers. The Regina Capitals were victorious, winning 7-3 in their final game on Sunday night, after three overtime wins previously. Eric Duran had three goals and two assists during the championship, and Braydon Delorme had a five-point game, with one goal and four assists.

Last playoff season, after a playoff run filled with overtime play, the Regina Capitals fell short and lost the bronze medal to

the North Peace Navigators in the 2016 Keystone Cup which was held here in Regina. Mr. Speaker, the team is ecstatic to have another run at the cup, as they come off an east division-leading 34-3-0-3 record during the 2016-17 regular season, also winning 12 of their 15 playoff games. With previous experiences battling for the Keystone Cup, the team feels prepared and ready for what is to come and are motivated to go all the way in this year's tournament. Their goal leading into the 2017 Keystone Cup which will be held in Arborg, Manitoba: no more overtimes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the athletes, staff, and sponsors of the Extreme Hockey Regina Capitals on their Junior B championship, and all the best on their journey for the 2017 Keystone Cup. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

### Cupcake Day Raises Funds for Animals

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Monday, February 27th marked this year's National Cupcake Day. This day supports the vital and worthwhile cause of raising money for our local humane societies and animal shelters by encouraging to people to make and sell cupcakes on their behalf. This year, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say the Prince Albert SPCA [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals] held its first-ever National Cupcake Day, and it was a sweet success.

At the beginning of February, our local SPCA put out a call for donations of cupcakes, which then they sold at the Gateway Mall. They received so many cupcakes, Mr. Speaker, that they actually had to extend their event and set up again on Saturday, March 4th. The SPCA said that community support for Cupcake Day was so great the event will be brought back again next year.

Mr. Speaker, the Prince Albert SPCA does a wonderful job taking in lost or abused animals in and around our city. They are always in need of food, blankets, and toys, and the money raised from National Cupcake Day will help take a bit of the strain out of their budget.

I have no doubt, knowing Prince Albert, that next year's National Cupcake Day will be even bigger and better. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating the staff and volunteers of the Prince Albert SPCA on the success of their first annual National Cupcake Day in Prince Albert. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

### Hunter Brothers Win Music Awards

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to stand today and highlight some local country music talent. Luke, J.J., Dusty, Brock, and Ty Hunter were born and raised in Shaunavon, Saskatchewan. We know them as the Hunter Brothers. Growing up, the brothers worked on the family farm, played hockey for the Edmonton Oilers and Kelowna Rockets, and singing gospel music.



They decided to try their talents in country music. The Hunter Brothers joined the label Open Roads in 2015, releasing two singles that peaked at positions in the top 40 list in 2016 — “El Dorado,” and “Long Way to Love You.” Even their little video on Facebook, *The Combines Stuck*, went viral last fall while harvesting, hitting over 1.5 million views.

They hit the road last year and did a radio tour across Canada in 2016 performing live acoustics on TV and radio stations across Canada. Mr. Speaker, they have also received their fair share of awards. They received two awards at the 2017 Saskatchewan Country Music Awards — Emerging Artist of the Year award, and top Group of the Year award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Hunter Brothers on their great year. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

### **Sod-Turning for Genesis Grain & Fertilizer**

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, our government has been working very hard the last decade to make sure that Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work, and to invest. A great example would be the announcement of Genesis Grain & Fertilizer moving ahead to build its first of a series of farmer-owned fertilizer super centres. Last week I was pleased to participate in the sod-turning ceremony of Genesis’s \$25 million facility being constructed at Belle Plaine. It will have a 25 000 tonne storage capacity as well as a blending and distribution centre.

Mr. Speaker, this new facility will be designed to handle 150 000 tonnes of product annually, products that includes local potash, urea, phosphate, micronutrients, and sulphur. Once completed, this will be one of the biggest direct-to-farm facilities in the country, and it’s been financed in part by farmers who will share ownership with Saskatoon-based ag input retailer, Farmers of North America, and AgraCity. The plan is to have seven of these facilities to be built across the Canadian prairies, and we’re thrilled that the first is going to be built here in Saskatchewan.

I welcome the new Genesis farm, grain, and fertilizer facility and thank the farmers and companies who are investing in this project right here in Saskatchewan, and I invite all members to join me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina University.

### **Saskatchewan Entrepreneurs at G20 Young Entrepreneurs’ Alliance Summit**

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I’m really happy to highlight the individuals who will be representing Canada at the G20 Young Entrepreneurs’ Alliance Summit this year in Berlin. The alliance selected 35 entrepreneurs from Canada to travel to this summit where they will engage with G20 [Group of 20] leaders and policymakers while sharing this experience with over 400 entrepreneurs from around the globe.

This year, three young people from Saskatchewan will be representing our province and nation at the summit. They are Regina’s own Tynan Wenarchuk and Tyler Willox as well as Saskatoon’s Katrina German.

Tynan is Regina-born, has recently moved to Calgary where he founded his company, Illuminate which focuses on corporate culture and employment engagement strategy.

Katrina is the CEO [chief executive officer] of Lifetime Productions, and has influenced millions of people through digital storytelling and online media.

And Tyler Willox, who is no stranger to this government, was recently slated as the Chair of the board of directors for the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce, the youngest in Regina history. I’ve been fortunate enough, Mr. Speaker, to work alongside Tyler in many capacities, and I cannot be prouder of this deserving individual and the others from Saskatchewan to represent us and all of our young entrepreneurs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to congratulate Tynan, Tyler, and Katrina on being selected to represent Canada at the prestigious Young Entrepreneurs’ Alliance G20 Summit this year in Berlin.

### **QUESTION PERIOD**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

### **Details of Land Transaction**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, thousands of people have been speaking out against the consequences of the Sask Party’s mismanagement, scandal, and waste all across Saskatchewan. But the Sask Party refuses to accept any responsibility for the financial mess they’ve created.

The Premier has become so arrogant and out of touch that he won’t even stand in this Assembly to answer basic questions about his GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal. And yesterday, Mr. Speaker, he snuck past reporters who were waiting to ask him questions out in the rotunda.

And the rest of the cabinet of course isn’t much better. The Economy minister told us yesterday, “. . . we are committed to working with the Privacy Commissioner . . .” But from these GTH documents to pipeline inspection reports, they refuse to comply with the rulings, and they won’t follow the law. The Privacy Commissioner has said the facts in these certainly aren’t commercially sensitive, so really there’s no reason the Premier can’t tell us: how much money per acre did CP [Canadian Pacific] Rail pay for its land at the GTH?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the process that we’re following in terms of privacy, in terms of confidential documents is exactly the same process that members opposite followed when they were in the government, and it served the province very well.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

### Contracts With Public Employees

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, he got to his feet today. Didn't find much of an answer, but we hope that he'll follow the ruling of the Privacy Commissioner.

You know, yesterday while the Premier was hiding from the journalists, it was the Minister of Finance that went out to cover for him. He was asked about the letter from the Sask Party government telling school divisions to immediately get started on negotiations with their employees to cut their pay by 3.5 per cent. It gave them only four days to fill out a "reporting template." It said savings could not come through "... further reductions in staff levels, capturing attrition or other cost reductions ...". Mr. Speaker, immediate wage cuts were the only option.

The minister, though, told journalists, "We're not asking them to break contracts, just come back to the negotiating table." And then, "If that means layoffs, that's where we're going as far as an option." Mr. Speaker, when it was pointed out that he was contradicting the letter, he added, "I don't necessarily agree with that language in the letter."

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier finally be straight with Saskatchewan people and commit to not ripping up contracts and not firing any more of the people who teach our kids?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is going to be no contracts ripped up with any public sector unions, with any unions representing public service providers in the province of Saskatchewan. We've been very clear about that, however, that we need to find another 3.5 per cent reduction in the overall costs of compensation for the public sector, Mr. Speaker. We've asked that, from our side of it, from the government management side of it, that all options remain open, Mr. Speaker. We need to respect the collective bargaining process and see what is agreed to by both the unions and management.

They'll know, Mr. Speaker, that we have set that goal though to be achieved, a 3.5 per cent reduction, which we have taken first for ourselves, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislative Assembly have taken first for themselves. And now we're going to be encouraging those tables to be engaged when contracts expire, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], for example, the contract I think expires this summer and then collective bargaining will occur, as it should, between both trustees and the STF.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

[14:15]

### Government's Fiscal Management

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, pretty rich, pretty

offensive coming from a Premier who's received almost half a million dollars in top-ups, Mr. Speaker, and has increased the number of MLAs by three in this Legislative Assembly.

Either they're ripping up contracts or they're not. They, you know, need to get their stories straight, and they need to be attacking ... you know, stop attacking everyone else except themselves, Mr. Speaker. They need to take some responsibility for their actions. And yesterday of course, the Finance minister went out there, covering for the Premier, answering these questions. He says, well we have to do it; we have to do it. Page 46 of the budget. I see the Premier holding the book here today. Well, Mr. Speaker, they wrote the budget. They're the ones that put that, and the writing was on the wall, Mr. Speaker, a long time ago.

The fact is, they didn't come clean to Saskatchewan people. And you know, at the end of the day, it's not our teachers; it's not those that are serving in our classrooms that created the financial mess, the scandal, the mismanagement, or the waste and the massive deficit of the Sask Party, and they certainly shouldn't be paying for it, Mr. Speaker.

So if nothing else, if nothing else, as the Premier's holding his budget book and pointing to page 46 which he wrote, would he look to page 47 and at least come clean with Saskatchewan people and admit that, under the Sask Party in the past five years alone, they've doubled the debt to \$18 billion?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for divulging the great opposition research over there that has determined that the government wrote the budget, Mr. Speaker. Of course the government wrote the budget, as a result of, as a result of consultations that occurred prior to the budget, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the budget was tabled because it was written by the government. And in it, it highlights on page 47 that the cost savings we need to find from the public sector has to extend over a number of years. The bottom line is, the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that we are going to allow collective bargaining to determine how those efficiencies will be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, and as for debt, Mr. Speaker, as for the fiscal probity and responsibility of the government, I would just point this out to members opposite. I would point out the headline from credit rating agency DBRS [Dominion Bond Rating Service Ltd.], who I probably will trust more on the issue of fiscal responsibility than members opposite. They said Saskatchewan's budget represents "A Determined Plan to Return to Balance." Far different was their headline for Alberta's budget, which is run by their brothers and sisters over in Edmonton — Alberta's budget, "Large Deficits and Rising Debt Erode Flexibility."

Mr. Speaker, you can look at *Maclean's* nationally, commentary in the *National Post*. They will point out that this province and this party and this government has gone another direction from what members opposite and their party are doing where they have a chance to control the levers, including in Alberta, where they decided to procrastinate, Mr. Speaker, on balancing the budget.

We made a different choice in this province. And to the member's question on debt — he hates this answer but it's true — operating debt inherited from members opposite, that big orange credit card, is down, Mr. Speaker, even after this budget.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

### Funding for Education and Libraries

**Ms. Beck:** — No clarity and no responsibility, Mr. Speaker. And the Education minister won't be clear about the conflict between what his deputy minister wrote and what the Finance minister said. The letter couldn't have been more clear. School divisions were ordered to immediately, quote, drag teachers and educational assistants back to the bargaining table and to do it whether their contracts were due or just beginning. It doesn't matter. And ordering boards, the people who work in our kids' schools . . . or ordering staff, the people who work in our kids' schools to accept a 3.5 per cent pay cut. The Finance minister said "I'm not threatening" but "If that means layoffs that is where we're going."

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please help me out. If telling people to take a pay cut or get fired is not a threat, what is it? Does he stand by this letter? And will he tell us how he, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Labour, and the Deputy Premier justifies breaking a signed agreement with our kids' teachers for the second time in two years?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to make it perfectly clear to the members opposite, to the teachers, and the great workers that we have in our province that it is absolutely not our intention to create an unfair labour practice, to breach the terms of a collective agreement. That is something we're absolutely not going to do.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this, though: we recognize the fiscal reality that our province has. We're prepared to sit down at a bargaining table and have a realistic discussion about things that we can do to reduce the cost of employment in our province. We want to have those discussions with our partners in the province. Mr. Speaker, this budget is not without challenges. We want to make sure that we do it in a respectful way, in a meaningful way. And, Mr. Speaker, those discussions will take place and I want to make it clear right now that we are not counselling, advocating . . . and we've told that to our people in the workplace. We are not advocating breaching a contract.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, that minister is the one who is ramming through changes to *The Education Act* that silences local voices and gives the power to guess who? Himself. He'll have full control to intervene in every single aspect of our kids' education from the director's office to the classroom and everywhere in between.

To be fair, he's not keeping all of the power for himself. He's also making it easier for the cabinet to close schools. That's

right. All of the protections for rural schools and local voices, that they brought in with so much fanfare and loved to talk about, they're now scrapping. It's clear the Sask Party has forgotten who they are working for, Mr. Speaker. That minister, that party, they're shutting down rural libraries and arguing communities don't need these community hubs. He even suggested yesterday that libraries should ask cities and towns for funding. Apparently he forgot that they're slashing their funding too.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister not see how arrogant he looks? Does he not understand why Saskatchewan families are opposed to this out-of-touch power grab to control our kids' education?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, amazingly the members opposite chose to accuse us of closing schools — this side of the House being accused by those people, the people that closed 176 schools. Mr. Speaker, I don't know, Mr. Speaker, who writes their questions for them, but, Mr. Speaker, to whoever writes their questions, I've got Wollaston Lake School, Shellbrook Elementary, Shellbrook Primary/White School, Canwood Elementary, Paddockwood Elementary, Domremy School, Canora Senior Elementary School, Buchanan School, William Derby Elementary in Strasbourg, Gerald Elementary in Gerald, Kayville School in Kayville, Radville Elementary in Radville, Spruce Lake Elementary in Spruce . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Crescent School in Regina, McNab School in Regina, Mable Brown School in Regina, Hawarden School in Hawarden, Elbow Elementary in Elbow, Strongfield Elementary, Togo Elementary, Grosvenor Park School in Saskatoon, Wilson School in Saskatoon, Quill Lake Elementary, St. Front School in Wadena, Weldon School in Weldon, MacDowall Elementary. Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on 176 times.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, that minister likes to talk about the list that's from 20 years ago, but not about the schools that he's putting on the chopping block today because of his actions.

Mr. Speaker, this is the same minister who says we need fewer libraries because of fewer people. Well he sure changed his tune since 2012 when he said, when he wanted to, and I quote, we want "... to ensure that we don't have people that are shortchanged or have to travel any further than they already do."

But, Mr. Speaker, he wasn't talking about libraries then. He was talking about three more MLAs that no one in this province asked for. But, Mr. Speaker, no one except for Sask Party strategists were asking for more MLAs. But thousands of people here in this province have come out to demand that he

reverse his attack on our libraries.

Can the minister admit that the right place to cut for long-term benefit for our province is to move to scrap the five MLAs? Will he reverse his cuts to the libraries?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raised a number of issues and I'll try and work through them in order.

Mr. Speaker, first he accuses us of closing schools. Mr. Speaker, schools that we've built and added, a record-breaking 21 new schools: in Martensville, Lake Vista and Holy Mary; in Warman, Traditions and Holy Trinity; Saskatoon, Sylvia Fedoruk, Ernest Lindner, Colette Bourgonje, Chief Whitecap, St. Nicholas, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Kateri Tekakwitha, St. Lorenzo Ruiz; École Harbour Landing in Regina, Plainsview in Regina, École Wascana Plains in Regina, Scott Collegiate in Regina, St. Kateri in Regina, St. Nicholas, St. Elizabeth, Sacred Heart. And even though the member, the critic, opposed it, a new school for Connaught.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

### Support for Municipalities

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, when the minister uses lines like that, he sounds almost as hard to believe as when the minister brags that they were so generous in how they have left the revenue-sharing program.

Mr. Speaker, our municipal leaders do not agree. Yesterday SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] representatives said that through all the Sask Party's cuts and downloadings, they have fully hollowed out the municipal revenue-sharing plan. They went on to say the municipal revenue sharing has "... become an excuse to hand more and more to our hometowns."

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party use municipal revenue sharing as an excuse to do whatever they want. Now after blowing through the province's, the Sask Party wants to raid the rainy day funds of our cities and towns. The Premier even said these reserves were funded by the province's municipal revenue-sharing program so they should be used to help get the Sask Party out of their financial mess.

But our cities and towns say that the reserves are theirs, and the reserve sharing went to serving Saskatchewan people. So whose facts would the minister like to correct — the Premier's, or the leaders of our cities and towns?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this is a serious issue, and in the wake of some city council meetings in both Regina and Saskatoon where the prospect of tax increases have been raised in both cities, although much more modestly in Saskatoon where clearly the council is earnestly looking at ways to accommodate the reduction in revenue, Mr. Speaker.

I would point out though that here in Regina, we are suggesting that reserves be considered, Mr. Speaker, so that taxpayers ought not to face a tax hike. And in this respect, I think we're joined by the current mayor, who in 2003 noted that the city of Regina reserves were, "Our reserves are in some senses excessive. They're large and they're growing." He noted that council members should keep those numbers in mind when considering to hike property taxes. We agree with then councillor Fougere.

As well, Mr. Speaker, in 2005 the then councillor and current mayor said that reserves, dipping into reserves specifically, that has been used ... [inaudible interjection] ... Well she yelled about 2005. That was back when there was no revenue sharing from members opposite, Mr. Speaker. That was when the NDP [New Democratic Party] was in charge, and for 16 years they downloaded onto municipalities. So what we inherited was a situation where that had to be rebuilt. But here's what was suggested by the then councillor and now mayor: Fougere said, council has been cautious about when it dips into reserves. But then he said, and I quote, "That has been used judiciously by members of council to help cut what could be a tax increase. I don't make any apologies for that," he said.

Mr. Speaker, that's the right sentiment at this point. We have a one-, two-, or three-year plan to balance, a short term to get through, Mr. Speaker. We're asking all of us to participate in getting the budget to balance, including for our towns and cities, to share in just 3 per cent of the overall resource revenues that are declined. And, Mr. Speaker, we ask this in the spirit of goodwill, based on our record where we have cleaned up a municipal funding mess inherited from members opposite, now for the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, 2.5 times more than it was when members opposite could do more than talk, when they actually had the chance to do something on this side of the House.

[14:30]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, what an utter load of nonsense from the Premier of Saskatchewan. What a total disgrace for every member of that caucus to back-pat and applaud that sort of a message from this Premier that twists around the reality that our cities are facing. The words and actions of that Premier and Sask Party are offensive to all the elected leaders in Saskatchewan.

You know that Premier has suggested that he's consulted mayors and councils. SUMA, the mayors and councils have said that's laughable and that it's an affront to consultation, Mr. Speaker. This is a Premier who couldn't manage his own resources, didn't save a dime, drained his rainy day fund, piled on the debt, Mr. Speaker, and now he's telling our cities and towns, responsible fiscal managers, to do the same thing the Sask Party did? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker. That's not on in Saskatchewan.

The fact of the matter is our cities and towns are going to do all they can. They're now looking at options, our two biggest cities, to actually charge the province for the school sites, Mr. Speaker. And how can you blame them? Their pockets have

been picked by this Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is this: we know he didn't have the decency or the . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Everyone needs to hopefully raise the decorum in this Assembly. I'd ask the Leader of the Opposition to ask his question now.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — We know the Premier of Saskatchewan didn't have the decency or the backbone to look directly at municipalities before cutting these needed dollars — mean-spirited, short-sighted, and damaging, Mr. Speaker. Will he finally do the right thing and sit down with the common-sense, elected leaders of our cities, towns, and villages and scrap this damaging cut?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, what my hon. friend forgets is that, in fact, we went right to SUMA and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and said everything was on the table, including revenue sharing which we kept whole, including the municipal surcharge which we kept whole, Mr. Speaker, and yes, including grants-in-lieu to which there was a change.

He's, Mr. Speaker, in high dudgeon today, talking about what might be an affront. What was an affront to the municipalities of this province is how the NDP treated them for 16 years, even when they were sitting on a pile of their own money, even when provincial government revenue, Mr. Speaker, was huge.

Mr. Speaker, here's what SUMA said. According to SUMA . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well they don't want to hear this, Mr. Speaker. They don't want to hear. This is their record. This is why they sit in the number they sit over there. According to SUMA, municipal revenue sharing was cut back by as much as 60 per cent from '91 to '97 and stagnant until 2003. In the 2017-18 budget, Mr. Speaker, Regina will receive, Regina alone will receive \$40.5 million in revenue sharing.

And here's one other point I would share with members opposite if they're worried about what's an affront to municipalities. The provincial government under the NDP froze municipal grants at \$85 million in 2005. While they were enjoying record revenues in oil and resource revenues, they froze it at \$5 million. In this budget, which they're decrying as some cuts to the municipal sector, what's revenue sharing today? \$258 million. We'll put our record on sharing with municipalities and infrastructure in municipalities against their record any day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Saskatchewan can try to disgrace the elected leaders of Saskatchewan, of our cities and towns and villages, all he wants. But we'll stand with them and we'll stand with the people of Saskatchewan.

You know, the Premier makes a mockery of accountability day after day as he dodges question after question on his scandal, and he makes a mockery of consultation with Saskatchewan people. And don't take our word for it. That's what SUMA is saying. The elected leaders and the mayors of our villages and towns all across Saskatchewan who said actually that, they said it was almost laughable for the Premier of Saskatchewan to suggest the tiny mention in his speech, of some mention of grants, as some sort of consultation. They said almost laughable, Mr. Speaker. And what they've said is that in fact it's an affront, Mr. Speaker, to them.

Mr. Speaker, the consequences are real. This is a Premier that broke his word and has broken trust with Saskatchewan people. This is a Premier that's adding a billion dollars of new tax hikes to Saskatchewan people, that can't balance the budget, and that's cutting and selling off things we count on.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, this Premier's very actions are putting our municipalities in a position to be forced to bring forward more tax hikes and service cuts to the people of Saskatchewan. Why did the Premier not have the decency to be straight with our cities and towns and Saskatchewan people? Why is he making them do his dirty work?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on this particular option in terms of the choices that municipalities can make, we very much are standing with taxpayers. We are saying, we are saying, Mr. Speaker, that municipalities have enjoyed fairly and it's absolutely true to say record revenue sharing over 10 years, so much so that they've been able to put more into reserves. The city of Regina's reserves have doubled since 2010. In part that's due to the generous revenue sharing . . . In part it's due to the generous revenue-sharing formula of the Government of Saskatchewan.

So they have these significant reserves. And I credit Saskatoon; they're looking at a very modest tax increase, maybe not one at all. We're asking all municipalities to look at the short-term measure of reserves that were in fact aided by the revenue sharing on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, to help share in the balance plan budget of the government. And, Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, we have a plan to get to balance in three years.

I don't know what members would offer on that side of the House but we could only go by their past record. What did they do when they faced the fiscal challenge? How about 176 schools closed? That's what they did when faced with the challenge. How about 52 hospitals closed? That's what they did when faced with the challenge. How about 1,100 long-term care beds shut down? That's what they did when faced with the challenge — fewer teachers, 600 nurses fired, and 21 tax hikes, and the worst job creation record in the country.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what. That's turned around. These challenges are real. We will meet them and we will ensure what has been the second-best job creation record in the country and some of the fastest population growth we've ever had will continue, Mr. Speaker, under this plan. I look forward to hearing what members have to offer opposite.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

## SECOND READINGS

## Bill No. 50

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 50 — *The Provincial Capital Commission Act*** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to join debate on this particular bill and especially at this particular junction, Mr. Speaker, because with *The Provincial Capital Commission Act*, what this government is trying to accomplish is a takeover of the Wascana Centre Authority, Mr. Speaker. They talk about a whole bunch of different things and they'll try to imply that the partners in the University of Regina and the city of Regina have somehow, by commissioning a report back in 2011 and into 2014, that they're somehow on board with these changes, Mr. Speaker.

But of course last night, Mr. Speaker, in estimates, we couldn't get . . . You know, after repeated questioning, the minister could not produce proof of whether or not the city's on board or the university's on board. They'll talk around a bunch of different things, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes down to it, when they are asked to produce the evidence that, you know, these are changes that would make this an amicable thing, something about the best interest of the Wascana Centre Authority, Mr. Speaker, when they're asked to produce that, they can't do it, Mr. Speaker, because that's not what happened.

And in terms of this partnership, Mr. Speaker, that's been around since 1962, that's built on the great work of master plans dating back to 1913, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the way that this government fumbles its file on this score, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to imagine what the real end game is in terms of the Wascana Centre Authority and the assets that belong with that entity. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to have a lot of questions for this minister as regards the plans for those assets.

And I guess if the best indicator of future behaviour is indeed past behaviour, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again to use one of the favourite sayings from the Premier — that's always so nice when he coins that one, Mr. Speaker — if that is indeed what we can expect, Mr. Speaker, once they get their hands on the Wascana Centre Authority, once they get control of that board, Mr. Speaker, you know, mark my words: the sale is going to be on like it's on throughout the rest of the government, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of that tremendous public good, that tremendous public asset that is Wascana Centre Authority, Mr. Speaker, the way it is valued so deeply by the people of not just Regina but throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, the way that this government takes 55 years of partnership and throws it away with a takeover bid, Mr. Speaker, where . . . And again this is,

you know, this is someone who should know, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the councillor from the city of Regina by the name of Robert Hawkins, a man who ran for that party in 2011, Mr. Speaker, who came within 200-odd votes of becoming the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Lakeview. Since went on to serve in civic government, Mr. Speaker. Also a professor at the university, well known to many of us here.

When the budget came down, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what did that individual say about this government and about this measure in particular, Mr. Speaker? He said that this budget came like a thief in the night, Mr. Speaker. That's what he said about this budget. And he said this budget has darkness around the corners. And what was he talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker? He was talking about the plans on the part of this government for Wascana Centre Authority.

And, Mr. Speaker, right now as it stands in the board where the decisions are made by the Wascana Centre Authority, Mr. Speaker, you've got a balance between the parties. You've got five board members appointed by the province. You've got three appointed by the university, and you've got three appointed by the city. And, Mr. Speaker, that has been a balance of partnership that has served us more or less well for the past 55 years.

And they want to take that partnership, Mr. Speaker, and as we see on so many other fronts, it's not enough to have partnership. They want to have control. They want to take that board and change it to a balance of three appointees from the province, one from the university — that the province will pick from the list submitted by the university, Mr. Speaker; they can't even do that by themselves — and one in a similar manner from the city.

And, Mr. Speaker, you wonder why that is. How can it be that . . . You know, it's existed 55 years. It made it through the big dig, Mr. Speaker. It's been so well valued by the people of Saskatchewan. How is it that they're coming forward with this measure at this time? Well, Mr. Speaker, again I would refer you back to the remarks of Councillor Hawkins as regards this budget coming like a thief in the night and as regards the darkness that is there around the corners of this budget, Mr. Speaker.

And so when you're listening to different officials on the part of this government try to explain this legislation, Mr. Speaker, and the reason for it, and you may be struck by the feeling that, you know, what they're saying doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker, you're not alone. You're not alone, Mr. Speaker, because what they're saying doesn't make any sense.

They can talk about how a co-operative, collaborative process has served the park very well, and then on the other hand, well we want to streamline that. And well you know, they were part of commissioning that report, Mr. Speaker, that made those suggestions around governance, but no, they didn't actually endorse those governance recommendations. But we're going to go ahead with them anyway, Mr. Speaker.

So what the heck is this all about? When are we going to get a straight answer from this government about the real purpose of the move to take over the board of Wascana Centre Authority?

[14:45]

And again, Mr. Speaker, this is at the same time when they're moving to one big health region; when they're moving to take over the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education system in this province; when they're writing terms for the budgets of our post-secondary education institutions, Mr. Speaker. When they're taking a run at the reserves out there in our provincial library system that don't exist, Mr. Speaker, and they're using that as some kind of cause for going after those reserves.

When they're taking what has been a positive, productive partnership with our municipalities, Mr. Speaker, and doing damage to that, and passing along cuts and tax increases to those institutions to make, to do the dirty work of this government, Mr. Speaker. It's all part of a whole. It's all part of a whole on the part of this government.

And you know, this is a government of course that came forward with Bill 40 because they wanted to use *The Interpretation Act* to go after a privatization agenda, Mr. Speaker. They couldn't get it past the people in the light of day, Mr. Speaker, so like the budget, here it comes like a thief in the night, Mr. Speaker, to try and get it past people because they know that that permission isn't forthcoming. It wasn't coming at election time, and it wouldn't be coming at a referendum time, Mr. Speaker. So they go after *The Interpretation Act* to try and get through a trick that which they can't get on the face of it, Mr. Speaker.

So you know, you can almost set the timer to when the different deals are going to come forward to privatize chunks of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, those public assets that have been built up by Saskatchewan men and women over generations. And you don't have to . . . Again, if the best predictor of future behaviour, Mr. Speaker, is indeed past behaviour, you can't even take them at their word when it comes to something like the Saskatchewan Transportation Company.

This is something that they said was an essential service. They said it was safe, that it was a needed service, Mr. Speaker. And it's not even a year after the election when they said all of these things, looked the people straight in the eye, said those things, made those promises. And they come back with a broken promise, Mr. Speaker, that throws hundreds of lives into chaos, Mr. Speaker.

And again . . . I hear the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy hollering from his seat. And again I think, you know, having shared a platform with that individual during election time, talking to seniors, Mr. Speaker, if they had the plan around STC then, Mr. Speaker, he should have talked about it then. He should have had the guts to tell the seniors about the plan, Mr. Speaker. But we didn't hear anything about that. It waits for a year later, Mr. Speaker, to come again, as Councillor Hawkins has said, like a thief in the night. So again, Mr. Speaker, that this government has lost its way so badly that, you know, couldn't find their moral compass with a map, Mr. Speaker.

In this particular bill, it's just one more part of a pattern, Mr. Speaker, in terms of a government that I don't know if they're going to come back with a new definition for *The Interpretation*

*Act* around partnership, Mr. Speaker, because they preach partnership but what they practise is something very different.

So, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the discussion that's going to take place on Bill 50 in the committee. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd invite my colleagues opposite to do what they need to do to move it onward to committee so we can have that discussion. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Central Services that Bill No. 50, *The Provincial Capital Commission Act*, Crown and Central Agencies, be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Second reading of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 50, *The Provincial Capital Commission Act*, be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The bill stands committed to the Committee of Crown and Central Agencies.

### Bill No. 61

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Harrison that **Bill No. 61 — *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Act*** be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, this one's interesting because this is something that they actually ran on and now are moving to keep the promise in the platform, Mr. Speaker, you know. Unusual for its . . . Remarkable for its quality of, you know, not being a broken promise to add to the list over there, Mr. Speaker. And again I haven't been around for a million years. I haven't been as long around as some, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I, you know, will not name names certainly. But I've been around long enough to know when the government put the list of promises made, promises kept up on the government website, Mr. Speaker, as a government document. And here we see, Mr. Speaker, a promise that was made in the election — fair enough — and a promise that they're moving to keep.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of fostering innovation in terms of the work that's going to be done under this incentive, we look forward to having a more detailed discussion with the minister about that in committee.

But, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is signal for what it is not, which is another broken promise on the part of this government or another promise where they talk, you know, sort of vaguely about keeping Saskatchewan strong, and then come forward with a billion dollars of tax increase. Or where they come forward with cuts for, you know, the ... Again the Saskatchewan Transportation Company stands out, Mr. Speaker, because they said it was an essential service. They said it was a needed service, Mr. Speaker.

And again, you know, it's almost like the members opposite, it's almost like they were taking over after a decade of some other government being in power, and then going to open the books and see where things were at, and to find out what they could and could not afford, Mr. Speaker. But of course that's not the situation here. This is not the situation. This follows on a decade of those individuals in government, Mr. Speaker. So if they're acting surprised, Mr. Speaker, I'd suggest that it's heavy emphasis on act, because it's those individuals that sat in the cabinet seats, Mr. Speaker, that made the decisions around the timetable of holding off the budget until after the election, that set up this phony-baloney transformational change process after the budget, Mr. Speaker.

And again yesterday in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we heard the Premier talk about, you know, how they started to talk about transformational change after the election, Mr. Speaker, like that's some kind of a mandate. You know, again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the kind of sand that that entails, Mr. Speaker, that's not where you get a mandate. You get a mandate going to the election and saying, here's what we're going to do.

And you know, again I hear my friend, the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, chirping some more from his seat. And again, Mr. Speaker, I'd suggest he cast his mind back to the '91 election because promise number one, after all the crazy things that had gone on under that government, Mr. Speaker, leading up to '91, promise one on the part of Roy Romanow and those people was to open the books, Mr. Speaker, to open the books and to figure out where the heck the province was at because this is a government over there, Mr. Speaker, that in 1990 didn't even pass their last budget, Mr. Speaker. They ran that election on five years plus a day, Mr. Speaker. It was like they were on federal time, Mr. Speaker.

So again, that this government, that this government made a conscious effort to hold the election before the budget went to the people, so that people could make an informed set of decisions around what this government was on about. You know, it's too darn bad, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government didn't have the guts to come forward and say, here's what our platform is. Here are all these cuts that we're going to make. Here are all these taxes we're going to increase. They didn't do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They didn't do that. They didn't do that at all.

So here we are. Oh well, pardon me. They did do that in the exception. And the exception that proves the rule is a bill like this, where they actually ran on it. They're coming forward with it, and good enough, Mr. Speaker. Fair enough. That's how it's supposed to work. So in that regard, Mr. Speaker, we've got more questions about this particular piece of legislation, that we look forward to committee to ask them. And with that, I'd invite

my colleagues opposite to do what they need to do to move this bill on to committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the committee is a motion by the Minister of the Economy that Bill No. 61, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Second reading of this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — To which committee will this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 61, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Act* be committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

### Bill No. 63

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 63** — *The Education Amendment Act, 2017/Loi modificative de 2017 sur l'éducation* be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and what a bill this is. We had the Finance minister and the Premier get up on March 22nd, tell the people of Saskatchewan that, you know what? They listened for months and months of consultations. They heard the people of Saskatchewan. They listened to their backbenchers who were saying that it was very, very clear that the people of Saskatchewan wanted to keep their locally elected trustees, that they wanted to make sure that there was a voice that was local that the people of Saskatchewan could reach. So the Premier and the Finance minister got up on March 22nd and said, we have listened to the people of Saskatchewan; we're going to keep our locally elected trustees.

Well what they didn't tell people on March 22nd was the fine print, and that was that they were going to remove all of the powers for locally elected trustees; that this locally elected trustees will no longer have the powers that they have right now; that they will be the face of education, but they will not have a voice. And they will not have any control over what's going to happen with respect to any of their school boards.

This is an offensive, offensive bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It flies in the face of everything that we heard from the people of Saskatchewan, everything that those backbenchers heard from the people of Saskatchewan, and completely undermines the system, the democratic system that we've been operating on in



this province for at least a hundred years.

This bill, as I said, guts the powers of trustees. It gives the control over to the minister. And I don't know why we have a government that's so desperate to control everything in this province right now. We have amalgamations in the health regions. We heard about control being taken away from the Wascana Centre Authority, and we're seeing it as well in education. And I hope that the people of Saskatchewan are listening and I hope that the backbenchers are listening, especially the ones that had the courage to speak up against the potential for amalgamations and the potential for losing locally elected trustees. And I hope that they're speaking out against cabinet now.

Well they should have been doing it before they approved this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know what happened. I'm hoping that they just failed to read the fine print and they didn't realize what they were actually approving because it flies in the face of everything that we heard from the Saskatchewan people. And I'm sure it also flies in the face of everything that they heard from the Saskatchewan people. Because when the Saskatchewan people asked to keep their locally elected voices, they also meant that they wanted to keep those local elected voices to have the powers to actually affect change and to be able to make the changes that are important for everybody's specific school divisions, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think all members here can understand that every region in this province is a little bit different. Every school board in this province has its own nuances, its own special challenges and successes, which is why it's so important to have this local elected voice, why it's so important for us to have grassroots-level elected politicians, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the form of these trustees.

Apparently the Sask Party thinks it's appropriate to have the entire education system run out of Regina. And if they don't want to believe me on this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why don't we hear from Dr. Shawn Davidson, the president of the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], who did a press conference earlier this morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I had the pleasure of listening to his concerns. Apparently he's been waiting with bated breath for the minister to call him and perhaps maybe consult with the SSBA on this bill, but unfortunately he hasn't heard from him yet. I'm hoping that the Minister of Education finally comes to his senses and decides to give a phone call to Dr. Davidson and have some actual consultation with the SSBA.

[15:00]

Let me read some of the quotes from his press conference that he gave today. "No meaningful consultation with the school boards of the province in ensuring that local autonomous voices is preserved in the law." And that's with respect to this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's clear that the SSBA was thrown completely off-kilter with respect to this. They had no warning that this was the direction that the Government of Saskatchewan was going to go in, which sounds like a lot of the way this Sask Party has decided to consult with respect to this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We've been hearing from mayors and councillors that they experienced the same level of consultation before they released this budget.

And if the members that sit on that side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, don't want to listen to their constituents, perhaps they'll listen to Mr. Davidson, who made it very clear what he's heard from the Saskatchewan people. And he said, "The public wants boards to be the voice of public education, not the face of public education."

These locally elected trustees should have the powers to make decisions with respect to their school boards. They should not be nothing but figureheads or the face of education system when they don't have any control over what's happening in their school divisions, when they have a minister sitting in his office in Regina or Saskatoon reaching down into a local elected school board in Chinook, in Prairie Valley, in the North, in Melfort, for example.

And he gave an even more poignant quote that I want to make sure that the members opposite pay attention to. He says:

The kids of this province deserve to have advocates. They deserve to have boards that are empowered and able to make decisions and able to bring the grassroots voice of the local level to education.

And afterwards he called on the public to let their MLAs know that this is a poorly thought-out bill, that it's going to gut the powers of trustees, that it's going to gut our ability to have local voices enter into the discussion around education and be able to make decisions with respect to education.

And I hope that the MLAs opposite pay attention to those phone calls once they receive them and pay attention to the voices of Saskatchewan people who stood up in opposition to calls for potential amalgamations back prior to the budget. And I know members on this side were travelling across the province, listening to the people of Saskatchewan as they were holding town halls to express their frustration over this Sask Party decision.

And with the work of the SSBA, I know that the public is going to realize that despite what the Premier and the Finance minister said on March 22nd, they've done just what they said they would not do, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's so disappointing to see this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It flies in the face of everything that's good in our school system. It's going to create havoc in our education system. This is a poorly thought-out bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know other members on this side of the House are going to have more comments about this bill. I hope that if members opposite won't pay attention to the debate that we are giving and the reasoned arguments against this bill that we giving, I hope they pay attention to the words of SSBA president, Dr. Davidson. And I hope they pay attention to the words of their constituents. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll adjourn debate on Bill No. 63.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Douglas

Park has moved to adjourn Bill No. 63. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 64

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 64 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (SaskPower and SaskEnergy) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today and speak to this bill. And as the member for Regina Elphinstone just mentioned, it's my birthday today, Mr. Speaker. I'm 42 years old.

[Applause]

**Mr. Meili:** — Thanks very much. Thank you for the good wishes. Kind of you. Everyone's feeling very generous and kind today. That's very nice. I appreciate it. It's been that kind of a day, hasn't it?

You know, as I said, it's my birthday today — 42 years old — and I'm not going to be able to join my family today to celebrate. So I got a chance to celebrate the other day, a bit to my surprise. I came home from Ottawa. I was off for meetings at the Broadbent Institute Progress Summit and a meeting of Upstream. I flew home from Ottawa, and then got to spend a couple of hours at home and had to drive down to Regina in time for session. And much to my surprise, my son, who's five, and his grandma, had arranged a surprise party for me — balloons, decorations, stick drawings of Harry Potter all over the house, an ice cake. It was a nice surprise. I like a surprise party and I think a lot of people do.

But you know, there is one of the characteristics of surprises that I think are essential, is they have to be as pleasurable for the person receiving the surprise as for the person giving the surprise.

And you know, we've been seeing some pretty different kinds of surprises these days, Mr. Speaker. You know, we had people who counted on the libraries in this province, counted on the libraries as a place to get books or go and use the computer and look for jobs or just a social centre. But surprise — we're going to cut those libraries, cut them by a huge portion. When it comes to the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, no funding. When it comes to many, many other areas, deep cuts that certainly will lead to job losses and likely closure of branches.

We have families who count on their kids being able to have good quality education, be able to have, for example, support if their child has a learning challenge, have support in the classroom. They think they can count on that to have a good future for their kids. Well surprise — we're not going to do that so much anymore. We're going to cut education deeply. And

surprise — on top of that, we're going to increase your education taxes. Somehow we're going to give you less but get you to pay more.

Maybe there's somebody who is in hospital and dealing with a serious illness or the pending loss of a loved one, and would like some support on the spiritual side, make sure that they're able to process that tragedy that's coming up and reach out to that deeper part of them and, you know, they count on the pastoral care that's in hospitals. Surprise — it's not there anymore. We're not going to have that service, as valuable as it is.

Or maybe somebody counts on taking the bus, whether it's to ship parts to town or out of town, out to the rural areas, or they count on it for transport. In fact we had people come down to watch the budget who took the bus down. Surprise — there's no bus to go home. You're taking a cab home. Big surprise. Big surprise.

And you know, there's all kinds of people who have signed contracts, signed contracts that they can count on, that they can count on their wage increases as they've been allotted in their contracts, be able to count on their wage that they've signed up to earn. Well surprise — everything is on the table, including things that we've signed with you.

So a lot of surprises, you know, a lot of surprises in this budget. Another big surprise was for the professors and students and instructors at the universities and colleges across this province, who on budget day discovered, hey, 5 per cent cut all across the board and wage cuts and job losses and program losses to come with it. Big surprise — thought you were going to have an education that you could afford? Thought you could come out of school without too much debt? Surprise — not going to happen. You're going to be doing what this province is doing and watching your debt grow.

Well those are some pretty classic surprises from this government, pretty out-of-the-box surprise thinking there. But there's one enormous surprise, epic surprise you might say, an epic surprise in this budget, and that's for the cities of this province. A \$35.8 million surprise to the cities.

And you know, we heard it today in question period. We've heard it lots from the Premier and the members opposite — oh, we told you this was coming. You know, we said everything was on the table. We told you about grants-in-lieu.

In a laundry list of potential cuts, of potential changes, you slip in some subtle mention of a change. That is not consultation. That is not letting people know. Nobody listening to that, nobody sensible would be listening to that thinking, oh, they're going to completely yank that program that we've counted on for over 50 years in the case of many cities. It's just going to be gone. That little subtle mention, we just better get ready because that's clearly not going to be there.

No, nobody saw that coming. Nobody saw that coming from such a vague reference. In fact I know the government would like us to think that that was some good foreshadowing, that that hint of what they were going to open up budget day was really clear. But that's not the response that we're hearing. And

I think if we want to know whether that message was delivered clearly, we should ask the people for whom the message was intended. We should ask the people for whom the message was intended, for example Saskatoon mayor Charlie Clark, who said, "We had no idea this was coming and it's a huge financial impact. It's unprecedented for the city to take a one-time hit like this."

Who else did we hear from? We also heard from former Sask Party candidate and Regina Ward 2 councillor, Bob Hawkins: "This budget comes like a thief in the night." Like I said, we like surprises, but nobody likes the surprise of a thief in the night. That's not a good surprise. Randy Donauer, Saskatoon Ward 5 councillor, described it as a transfer of a tax burden from one level of government to another, just because they can. Because they have the power to do that, and the cities have really no choice but to take that. Regina mayor Michael Fougere said it came out of nowhere. Many municipalities have already set their budgets, and that's why there's some angst and concern and anger from this council. Moose Jaw city manager Matt Noble said that, "This is out of the blue. It's a total blindside." And Yorkton mayor Bob Maloney saying, "Just to pass along what's been dumped on our plate, we need a 10 per cent increase in taxes. That transfer of that deficit onto the cities really can only be responded to by cutting services or increasing taxes." And perhaps the strongest message from North Battleford mayor Ryan Bater, saying, "Well, outrage is putting it lightly. We were absolutely blindsided by this budget."

Surprise, surprise. So why the shock at this particular surprise? Because we've seen really, perhaps among the strongest responses to this pretty troubling budget across the board, has been to this program, the cut to this program of grants-in-lieu. And I think if you ask most people in Saskatchewan a few weeks ago what grants-in-lieu were, they would have had no idea what that meant. It's a pretty arcane, little-understood program. But when you actually look at what it does and the purpose it plays, it is a payment in place of property taxes. SaskPower and SaskEnergy, in place of property taxes, deliver 5 per cent, a levy of 5 per cent to ratepayers that is then delivered to the cities. And then that money is given to the cities. That money is given to the cities.

It's a historic arrangement that's been in place for many decades. And the revenue-sharing formula, to which this government refers almost every day as a wonderful thing that they've done and practically invented, that revenue-sharing formula was put in place with the understanding of how grants-in-lieu worked, and that grants-in-lieu were in place.

The revenue-sharing agreement and the design of that formula was done with an understanding of the ongoing grants-in-lieu. And we've heard a lot about the revenue-sharing formula, as I pointed out, and we hear this every day from the Premier that there's unprecedented contribution from the province to the cities. But actually when you combine revenue sharing, grants-in-lieu, and capital expenditures, and the transfer, you actually see a decline from a peak in 2011 to actually a pretty steady decline over the last few years, with 2016 the lowest year in the last decade when you combine capital with revenue sharing with grants-in-lieu. Now that you've extracted grants-in-lieu you're going to see a much bigger drop from the per capita transfer from the province to the cities.

[15:15]

How big of a drop? Dozens of cities having a huge decrease in their inputs from the province. You've got Regina with a loss from SaskEnergy and SaskPower combining to . . . adjusted from the 18 million that was expected down to 10,661,722 is predicted for 2017-2018. We have Saskatoon at the same number, 10,661,722. Those are obviously the two largest cities, the two biggest hits. We also see Moose Jaw from a combined . . . from SaskEnergy losing 934,242 and SaskPower, 1,778,202, for a total of 2,712,444. A pretty big hit for a city the size of Moose Jaw.

And we've heard from some cities that this is amounting to well over 50 per cent of what they were receiving from the province from other sources. Now that has been adjusted to some degree, but these are the numbers that are being predicted: Prince Albert, 2,433,854; Yorkton, 1,657,902; North Battleford, \$1,132,155; Estevan, \$896,328; Weyburn, \$765,715; Humboldt, \$477,319. We've seen protests in Humboldt over those numbers, as we've seen lots of people really upset by the size of the hit to that small city. Melfort, 420,390; Melville, 334,267; Swift Current, 523,490; Lloydminster, 191,031. Those are the cities that will lose from SaskEnergy and SaskPower.

From SaskEnergy alone we also see, ranging from the tens to hundreds of thousands, losses to Lloydminster, Kindersley, Warman, Nipawin, Martensville, Battleford, Tisdale, Rosetown, Assiniboia, Meadow Lake, Moosomin, Unity, Esterhazy, Maple Creek, Canora, Biggar, Shaunavon, Fort Qu'Appelle, Kamsack, Wynyard, Indian Head, Lumsden, Carlyle, Wadena, Eston, Wilkie, Oxbow, les beaux gens de Gravelbourg [Translation: the good people of Gravelbourg], Langenburg, Preeceville, Grenfell, Kipling, Kerrobert, Balgonie, Watrous, Leader, Carrot River, Kelvington, Gull Lake, Whitewood, Rosthern, Carnduff, Foam Lake, Wakaw, Redvers, Birch Hills, Macklin, Delisle, Wolseley, Rocanville, Watson, Strasbourg, Lanigan, Herbert, Cudworth, Stoughton, Churchbridge, Broadview, Kinistino, Arcola, Eastend.

The list goes on: Lampman, Balcarres, Sturgis, Langham, Elrose, Bruno, Qu'Appelle, Cupar, Midale, Bienfait, Milestone, LeRoy, Kyle, Cabri, Norquay, Asquith, Luseland, Lafleche, Mossbank, Saltcoats, Yellow Grass, Star City. I was in Star City the other day. They're very upset at the loss of the funding to the library; very upset about the loss of STC. Lemberg, Duck Lake, Burstall, Arborfield, Allan, Eatonville, Rose Valley, Alameda, Wapella, Bredenbury, Morse, Colonsay, Sintaluta, Zealandia, and Scott — all of those towns.

And I read that out. I know that sounds a little bit like I've been everywhere, man, but when you think about just how many towns, how many smaller communities and large cities are really being deeply hurt by this, you realize it's a big problem.

And those cities are also being hit in other ways. The cities are losing funding for libraries, whether that's the library cuts across the province or an actual complete elimination in Saskatoon and Regina.

We're seeing cuts to parks and conservation areas, the Meewasin Valley Authority being cut deeply and changed from its statutory funding. Wascana being handed over to the

province from the city, and the risks that are involved in that that have been so well elaborated upon by my colleague from Regina Elphinstone.

And of course we shouldn't overlook the impact that the PST [provincial sales tax] will have, especially when we're looking at capital expenditures. As you've added this on now, you know it's a 1 per cent hit on many, many things, but a 6 per cent increase on really substantial expenditures, including capital, when you look at construction. That's going to hit cities badly. A million dollars has already been predicted just in the current budget for the city of Saskatoon. If they want, if the universities want, if any other major facilities want to have capital expenditures, it's going to be a much more expensive proposition going forward.

So what has the Sask Party response been to this? When they've heard back, when the cities came and said, we're blindsided, we don't like this surprise. This is going to hurt us badly. What have they said? Dig into your reserves. You've got too much money sitting around; use it up. And maybe that's the one non-surprise from this budget, is because that's the Sask Party's approach. When they see a reserve, they want to spend it. When they see a rainy day fund, well it could be sunny outside but we're calling it rain because they want to drain those reserves.

And we see that, we're living the results of that when you look at other resource-rich jurisdictions around the world. They've been building their sovereign wealth fund, whether that's 840-some billion in Norway to 3 billion in the neighbouring province of Alberta. Here, what's our sovereign wealth fund? Well I don't know. Maybe I'll find some coins in the cushions of my chair here, but I'm certainly not finding any sovereign wealth fund. I encourage you to, you know, check in the seats there. See if you find any coins in the cracks because that's about all we've got for a sovereign wealth fund. It's entirely gone. We've been wasting the reserves of the province, and now the province wants us to waste the reserves of the cities, of the universities, of the schools. We want to use it up.

And that's not . . . And that's been an accusation, an accusation that these are just too much, that these reserves are enormous amounts of money. Let's look at what SUMA president Gordon Barnhart had to say about the reserves:

Many communities do not have large reserves, and besides, reserve funds are a contingency plan for snow removal emergencies, major water main breaks, and other unexpected catastrophic infrastructure needs — not for last minute, permanent cuts by the province.

So these reserves are of value, whether it's saving up for a capital investment or being able to respond in a time of crisis. If we exhaust the reserves at the level of the province, the level of the cities, the level of all of the important institutions — schools, universities, health regions — our ability to deal with shocks, already damaged, only gets worse. But this government has emptied its own pockets and now wants to empty the pockets of every other institution in the province.

And what will this mean for cities? What are they going to be able to do in response to this trouble? Well their options are really limited, and the jury is out. We don't know exactly what

every city will do, although we've started to hear now. We had Saskatoon giving us a bit more direction on what they're going to do. The reality is, the options for cities are few. They're in a box because they don't have what the province has in terms of opportunities. They can't run a deficit. They can't do things like this government did: change taxation. They don't have the options that this government did when designing the budget.

This government did not have to decrease corporate income tax. They did not have to drop personal income tax for that highest level. There was no need to do that, and it's not a helpful thing for the economy. It's a helpful thing for a very, very small sector.

And what have they done instead? They forced those tax cuts down to . . . Using those tax cuts, they've forced those costs down to the cities where they don't have the option. All they can do is cut services or charge people more taxes. So when we see hikes to municipal property taxes around the city, it should be very clear to the people of the cities that I listed that those tax increases are Sask Party tax increases. That's your surprise gift from this government, is they've decided to cut the funding transmitted to the city and give it . . . Really what they announced when they did that, they were announcing a tax increase in the cities of this province.

We've already seen Saskatoon tried to keep it low, but they still had to do a 1 per cent increase and wage freezes across the board. We have not yet heard what Regina will do, but we're hearing lots of talk of closing services, leisure facilities, etc., and lots of towns and cities talking about increases in their property tax.

What is very clear is that this Sask Party surprise will be passed on to Saskatchewan residents. And this is already a levy from ratepayers. This is already something that's being charged, that 5 per cent that's on SaskPower and SaskEnergy. It's charged to ratepayers, and it's transferred to the city for municipal services. But now, it's not going to be transferred to cities anymore. Yoink, it's just being taken. It's a surprise grab of this fund, and is it going to reduce costs for ratepayers? No. Is it going back to the Crowns? No. Very strangely, and this is one of the weirdest things about this bill, it's just going into the GRF, straight into the General Revenue Fund. For some reason, a property tax that isn't being paid by the Crowns, that 5 per cent levy for that is going into the General Revenue Fund. And that's very strange.

And it's also strange in the context of the minister having mused about this only being a one . . . actually really interesting to look at estimates. I wanted to mention this. When the Finance minister was asked about this, the Finance minister was asked, where is this money going? Is it going into the Crowns? He said, yes, sure, it's going into the Crowns. And then he had to be corrected because he didn't actually know, but instead he had answered with the logical decision. But instead we have an illogical decision, something that doesn't make sense.

And we've also heard talk of this being just a one-year change, that this is something that's just going to be for this year, and back, perhaps to mollify, to placate some of the resistance because the resistance and the anger about this is pretty serious. But we had Minister Harpauer suggesting it might be just a

year, but it's a strange thing to do to, to have us talking now about legislating something that's only going to be for a year. Are we going to come back and legislate it again in a year, in a year's time? Are we? And that comes back to the lack of stability, the lack of ability to really forecast and trust what's going to be able to happen.

And also in this bill we see added in here the indemnity, the inability for the cities affected to take this government to court retroactively or in the future. And to me that says that what we're seeing is a tacit acknowledgement that a word has been broken, that a contract, an agreement that's been going on for decades and decades has been ripped up at a moment's notice without any prior notice, that this is something that this government would be vulnerable to suit for. And that's why they're putting that clause in to protect themselves from that suit.

So what we have is a lack of respect for contractual agreements. We've seen that all over from this government. We also have a mix of false promises, a mix of false promises, things that cannot be counted on, and then sudden surprise changes, sudden surprise changes that make it difficult to plan, hard to look forward, and essentially impossible to trust this government. I don't know how cities can move forward with a relationship where they can possibly believe the assurances that they're getting that the revenue-sharing formula won't be tampered with. How do they count on that? And how do they budget?

They'd already budgeted for this year and then, yoiink, big surprise, you're losing your grants-in-lieu. How do you go forward trusting? And you know, it's when you get to that point, it's when you get to that point that your party cannot be trusted, that you're unpopular, that you need a name change. And you know, we've heard a name change before: the Progressive Conservatives, now the Sask Party. Well you know, it looks like you might need a new name. You might need to change your name to the surprise party because that's what you're doing. You're giving unwelcome, unpleasant surprises to the people of the province. And what we really need is a more stable relationship between the cities, the province, and the Crowns.

And it's for that reason that I will be joining my colleagues in voting against this bill. And I adjourn debate for today.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has adjourned debate on Bill No. 64. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. Why is the Opposition House Leader on his feet?

**Mr. McCall:** — With the intent to introduce a guest, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

[15:30]

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues opposite, particularly the Government House Leader, for bringing to my attention a former member of this Assembly seated in the western gallery. I'm referring to Kevin Yates, Mr. Speaker, who served as the member for Regina Dewdney from 1999 to 2011, first elected in a by-election, and anyway, Mr. Speaker, served in a variety of capacities both in government and in opposition. But, Mr. Speaker, it's been a while since I've seen Mr. Yates, and I don't think I've ever seen him up in the gallery. My frame of reference is right here on the floor, Mr. Speaker. So if I've got a bit of a filibuster going here, my apologies to colleagues. Leave to make an extended introduction. But anyway, with that I'd ask, Mr. Speaker, all colleagues to join me in welcoming Mr. Kevin Yates to his Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Gardiner Park.

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Elphinstone in welcoming Mr. Kevin Yates. I had the opportunity to come after him in that seat, Mr. Speaker. I had a chance to get to know him a little bit after that. His grandson is quite a young athlete and so we've seen each other at different sporting events throughout the city. And he's working on behalf of people in the province, still serving, and I believe he works up in Prince Albert area. So I'd like all members to once again welcome Mr. Yates back to the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — Move that this Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:32.]

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